

CD 2002-167-168

Saturday, December 7, 2002
8 pm. Walter Hall

University of Toronto
Faculty of Music
Presents

Percussion Ensemble

Robin Engelman, director

PROGRAMME

PULSE (1939)

Henry Cowell

*Performers: Richard Burrows, Jamie Drake, Mandy Lau, Steve Sajkowsky,
Tricia Sautner, Laura Savage*

WOODWORK for five percussion (1997)

Tim Ferchen

*Performers: Michael Gambacurta, Peter Jones, Ainsley McNeaney, Christa Mercey,
Antti Ohenoja*

DANCE VARIATIONS (Mvts. I, II, III, V and VI) (1983)

John Hawkins

Performers: Ian Gibson, Yente Kerr, Niamh Ni She, Antti Ohenoja

FOUR SONGS

Toru Takemitsu

Arranged for percussion by Robin Engelman (2002)

*Performers: Michael Gambacurta, Peter Jones, Ainsley McNeaney, Christa Mercey,
Tricia Sautner*

Will Tomorrow, I Wonder, Be Cloudy or Clear? (1992)

Handmade Proverbs (1987)

Sakura (Cherry Blossoms) (1979)

A Song of O's (Circles) and Δ 's (Triangles) – Maru to Sankaku no Uta (1984)

THIRD RULE OF THUMB (2000)

Barbara White

Performers: Richard Burrows, Ian Gibson, Devon Fornelli, Robert Foster

The photographing, sound recording, or videotaping of this performance without the written permission of the Faculty of Music is strictly prohibited.

We kindly request that you switch off your cellular phones, pagers, watch beepers, and any other electronic devices that could emit a potentially unwelcome sound.

Programme Notes

Pulse (1939)

HENRY COWELL

Pulse for six percussion, was composed for John Cage's newly formed percussion ensemble. It was written during a time when Cowell explored various world music materials and uses its instrumentation of Dragon Mouths, tom-toms, gongs and other percussion, to give this piece a distinctly Asian character. In the A section, thematic material introduced by the Korean Dragon Mouths is repeated by the tom-toms and the wood blocks similar to a Baroque fugue. The B section is characterized by an eighth note pulse. An A-B-A-B form is evident in the presentation of two distinct motives, which, after a brief pause, is concluded with a coda. — *Henry Cowell*

Henry Cowell (1897-1965) was a child prodigy on the violin, a concert pianist, and distinguished American composer. Composing over seven hundred works, Cowell is known for his free composition, innovations in avant garde piano technique, and as a link to various Asian musical influences. Cowell is said to have synthesized the ultramodern style with the totality of world music. He held positions at the New School for Social Research in New York, the Peabody Conservatory, and Columbia University. Cowell served as president of the American Composers Alliance (1951-55), was elected to the National Institute of Arts and Letters (1951), and was the first American Composer to be invited to the USSR (1929).

Woodwork for five percussion (1997)

TIM FERCHEN

Woodwork is a composition that deals with a small group of percussion instruments. Unlike metal, wood instruments have a rather short duration of sound and because of this players are forced to use various means to lengthen this sound. This piece deals first of all with the instruments own sound duration and proceeds to play with the ways the player can alter them, starting with the rather long sound of maracas,

through the very long sound of the quiro and then to the short sound of temple blocks and finally to the almost painfully short clave stroke. — *Tim Ferchen*

Tim Ferchen is a composer/percussionist in Helsinki, Finland and is an active performer of chamber and symphonic music. He studied percussion at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York.

Dance Variations (Mvts. I, II, III, V and VI) (1983)

JOHN HAWKINS

Dance Variations was written for and is dedicated to Bob Becker, Robin Engelman, Russell Hartenberger and John Wyre. Commissioned by Nexus through the Ontario Arts Council, the work was completed in August 1983 and is scored for glockenspiel, xylophone, marimba, vibraphone, bongos, congas and Roto – Toms. There are six movements. The first and second present the basic material of the piece in the simplest possible manner. Movement three (featuring xylophone and bongos) is more developmental. Movements five and six form the coda. — *John Hawkins*

John Hawkins is a professor of composition and theory at the University of Toronto Faculty of Music. He has been awarded the Jules Leger prize (1983) is a founding member of New Music Concerts in Toronto and a Woodrow Wilson Fellowship recipient. He has written numerous compositions and his *Two Pieces for Orchestra* has been performed by the London (England) Philharmonic under Andrew Davis.

Four Songs

TORU TAKEMITSU

Arranged for percussion by Robin Engelman (2002)

Besides his orchestral and chamber works, Toru Takemitsu wrote 20 songs. His earliest song was written at the age of 23 and he composed songs for movies, choirs and solo voice. Takemitsu also loved popular music and made

arrangements of Beatles songs, hymns and gospel songs for guitar. The four songs below were arranged for Nexus as part of a project suggested by Nexus member William Cahn. —

Robin Engelman

Will Tomorrow, I Wonder, Be Cloudy or Clear?

The poignant quality of Takemitsu's short lay is softened by the composers 1940's pop style setting. That style suggested to me a shuffling three-quarter time rhythmic introduction accompanied by brushes on a snare drum.

— Robin Engelman

1. *A day ago held sorrow,
Today is full of tears.
I wonder, will tomorrow
Be cloudy or clear?*
2. *Some troubles fade to Yesterday,
Other trials now are here.
I wonder, will tomorrow
Be cloudy or clear?*

ENGLISH TRANSLATION BY ELLA LOUISE RUTLEDGE & KIRSTI KALDRO. FROM: TORU TAKEMITSU SONGS I FOR MIXED CHORUS, SJ 1070, COPYRIGHT 1992, SCHOTT JAPAN COMPANY LTD.

Sakura (Cherry Blossoms)

Sakura (Cherry Blossoms) is one of the world's beautiful melodies and a most provocative poem. The image of cherry blossoms as portrayed in the poem *Sakura*, reminded me of delicate, resonant, floating sounds from metallic percussion instruments.

—Robin Engelman

*Cherry Blossoms, cherry blossoms
The spring sky stretching
As far as the eye can see
Is it mist or is it clouds
Scenting the air
Oh, come! Let us go*

Handmade Proverbs

"Handmade Proverbs" — four pop songs for six male voices — is a work commissioned by and dedicated to the King's Singers who premiered it in Tokyo in January of 1987. It was based on the following four proverbs taken from the poem

of the same title by Shuzo Takiguchi. —Toru Takemitsu

1. *Your eyes
Your eyes, your hands, your breasts . . .
You are twins in yourself.*
2. *Three bonzes
Three bonzes, three years facing with a
wall and living on air.
Three beggars ask them for their leftovers.*
3. *Cinderella's misfortune
Listen to a little girl singing in the ant
lion's pit:
The echo distorts some phrases —
Cinderella's misfortune.*
4. *A farewell gift
A farewell gift, a drop of dew fallen in the
palm of your hand:
The hour is a second.*

ENGLISH TRANSLATION BY KENNETH LYONS
COPYRIGHT 1987, SCHOTT JAPAN COMPANY LTD. SJ
1041

A Song of O's (Circles) and Δ's (Triangles) (Maru to Sankaku no Uta)

This Takemitsu song reminded me of *Doo Wop*, a commercial rhythm and blues vocal style that flourished in the 1940's and 1950's. The name *Doo Wop* was probably inspired by the nonsense syllables used by back up vocalists to accompany the lead singer. Takemitsu uses the word 'wa' in this fashion at one point in his work. In this arrangement, I have kept Takemitsu's melodies, but the rest is my personal fantasy on *Doo Wop*. —Robin Engelman

*The earth is round, I tell you.
The apple is red, I tell you.
The desert is big, I tell you.
I'm telling you, the pyramid is a triangle.*

*The sky is blue
The ocean is deep
The earth is round
I'm telling you, it's a little star!*

*The earth is round, I tell you.
The apple is red, I tell you.
Russia is huge, I tell you.
I'm telling you, the balalaika is a triangle!*

ENGLISH TRANSLATION BY ELLA LOUISE RUTLEDGE
FROM: TORU TAKEMITSU SONGS II FOR MIXED CHORUS, SJ
1081. COPYRIGHT 1984 SCHOTT JAPAN COMPANY LTD

Robin Engelman is a founding member of Nexus and is the conductor/Director of the University of Toronto Faculty of Music Percussion Ensemble. He was principal percussionist of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra during the tenures of Seiji Ozawa and Karel Ancerl and was also principal percussionist with the Canadian Opera Orchestra and three other North American orchestras. He has written works for the Amadeus Choir of Toronto, the Toronto harp and percussion duo ArpaTamboro, Sanya Eng & Ryan Scott and a number of his works for Nexus including *Lullaby for Esme & Remembrance* have been recorded.

Third Rule of Thumb (2000) BARBARA WHITE

Third Rule of Thumb was commissioned by the Fromm Foundation for the Talujon Percussion Quartet. The work is scored entirely for so-called unpitched percussion, including cast iron frying pans, tin cans, and a very large Brazilian caxxi (shaker) alongside more familiar instruments. There are several distinct types of material, which are eventually subsumed into a whirlpool of metal sounds. How might an entity lose its primary meaning or identity and take on entirely new connotations? –
Barbara White

Barbara White is an Assistant Professor of music at Princeton University. Among her many recorded compositions is *When the Smoke Clears* (1995) written for marimba soloist Nancy Zeltsman. The New York New Music Ensemble is a frequent performer of her music.



A NEW RECORDING BY THE UoT PERCUSSION ENSEMBLE

Music by
BOB BECKER
JOHN CAGE
JOHN BECKWITH
JO KONDO
TERRY HULICK

NOW AVAILABLE AT THE FACULTY OF MUSIC BOX OFFICE
Call 416-978-3744